



Cost dispute delays I-10 widening until 2008

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Work to widen Interstate 10 likely will start in early 2008, not this year, as the state had anticipated.

Until a funding agreement to pay for the Southwest Valley project's acceleration is in place, the Arizona Department of Transportation's hands are tied, spokesman Matt Burdick said.

"We were assuming we were going to start work sometime this year, assuming the agreements would be finalized," Burdick said. "This process is continuing to work, and you're looking at sometime next year for work to start, depending on what happens with the agreements."

The State Transportation Board on Friday postponed a vote on the funding. Meanwhile, Avondale, Litchfield Park and Goodyear are at odds over how much each should contribute.

The three cities, the state board and the Maricopa Association of Governments have to agree on who should pay interest costs, which have to be covered to move up the project by four years.

Once an accord is reached, ADOT will need less than two weeks to process financial documents, Burdick said. The state will take bids from contractors for about a month, and it'll take up to another month and a half before construction can begin.

Avondale City Councilman Ken Weise is confident the cities can work out a deal.

"Everyone's in a hurry to get this freeway widened. But it's not like construction is going to start tomorrow," Weise said. "Let's remember we're still moving this four years ahead of schedule."

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